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Twenty-fifth Annual Report

of the

National Child Labor Committee

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For the Fiscal Year Ending
SEPTEMBER 30, 1929

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WILEY H. SWIFT
Acting General Secretary

National Child Labor Committee
215 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY

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Publication No. 360

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

of the

NATIONAL CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE

For the fiscal year ending September 30, 1929

WILEY H. SWIFT
Acting General Secretary

The fiscal year of the National Child Labor Committee, ending September 30, 1929, was as good as the most hopeful could reasonably have expected.

Opportunities for work have been abundant. Doors have been open in many states. Calls for aid of one kind or another have come from all sections of the country. This may in part be attributed to the work policy of the Committee. Keeping constantly in mind its function to prevent the harmful employment of children, the Committee has just as constantly reminded itself and its representatives that its business is to educate rather than dictate. Its function, as we have understood it, is to lead the people of the different states to dictate to themselves wisely in the matter of regulating child employment.

At the same time we have understood that a certain amount of aggressive leadership is required. Where leading the fight seemed to be the only way to the accomplishment of a good end, we have not hesitated to assume leadership.

During the year the Committee was enrolled as a cooperating agency of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. This was, in part at least, formal recognition by the central body of the Committee's active cooperation with its state branches in a large number of states.

Believing that first thought and attention should be given to children in greatest need of protection from harmful employment, the Committee has continued to give consideration to the agricultural child labor problem. The attention of the heads of the Departments of Education and Labor in the different states was called to the wisdom of making it unlawful to employ any child at the time when the child is required by law to be in school, or would be so required, if a resident.

The Committee aided in holding a conference on this subject in Philadelphia, called by Mr. Bruce Watson, Director of the Public Education and Child Labor Association of Pennsylvania, and attended by persons of influence from Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. A luncheon meeting with an afternoon conference on the same problem was held by the Na-

tional Child Labor Committee in San Francisco, in June, in connection with the National Conference of Social Work.

While measured by law enactment these meetings did not bear direct results, in another way a great deal seems to have been accomplished. More and more the people are coming to demand that children be sent to school regularly. They are beginning to insist that children attend school at least to the age of sixteen unless excused for sound educational reasons.

INVESTIGATION

The function of the Department of Investigation is to learn the facts and set them forth so as to be readily understood by ordinary citizens.

During the year the Department made two major investigations (in Ohio and Oklahoma) and two minor studies (in New York and Pennsylvania).

Ohio

Before the first of October, 1928, it became evident that the child labor law of Ohio, known as the Bing Law, would be attacked in the legislature. Criticism was voiced by responsible individuals and groups, but there was no general agreement among the critics themselves as to what changes, if any, were needed.

Early in 1928 a conference of interested Ohio agencies had been called, and among other proposals it was suggested that a thorough study of the operation of the law be made. A committee was appointed to arrange the details, but failed to agree. By fall the rumors as to what the legislature was going to do in January had greatly increased. Many friends of the law were alarmed and unofficially suggested that the National Child Labor Committee ought to step in and do something. At that late date, the extensive study originally outlined could not be made and a report prepared before the meeting of the legislature. It was therefore decided to make a field study which would throw light on one of the chief criticisms of the law, namely, the seventh grade requirement. This study took about two months and the report was written and circulated in mimeograph form before the meeting of the legislature.

The findings showed two things: first, that the seventh grade requirement was not a seriously restraining factor in prohibiting children from leaving school to go to work; and second, that the chief difficulty was due to a misapplication of the law caused by a misunderstanding of its meaning.

In view of these findings the report made but a single recommendation—namely, that no changes should be made in the law until a careful study of the entire child labor law and related laws had been made. This opinion was strongly concurred in by representatives of the State Department of Education, the Bureau of Educational Research, and other agencies. The legislature made no changes in the law.

A committee to make such a study has since been organized. A special committee on the Bing Law has been appointed, and the National Child Labor Committee has been requested to make certain investigations.

Tulsa, Oklahoma

The studies made in the three cities of Oklahoma City, Enid, and Lawton, Oklahoma, described in last year's report created such interest that Dr. P. P. Claxton, Superintendent of Schools in Tulsa, requested that a similar study be made in that city. This study has been made and a report and charts prepared. It will be in print soon.

We now have a request from the President of the Oklahoma Branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the President of the Oklahoma Branch of the American Association of University Women, the Superintendent of the Public Schools of Tulsa, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the State Commissioner of Labor, that similar studies be made in a number of typical rural communities in order that they may have a general picture of child labor conditions in the state as a whole.

As a result of the studies already conducted, a special committee has been authorized to prepare amendments to harmonize and improve the compulsory school attendance and child labor laws. This committee will undoubtedly prepare a program of legislation for 1930; in fact, the National Child Labor Committee has promised aid to this committee. The way appears to be open for a campaign of education similar to that recently carried on in Missouri.

The Oklahoma reports, as well as other recent studies, reveal a condition which, although not altogether new, has been given little consideration—namely, that a great deal of work is done by school children before and after school hours.

New York

During the year the National Child Labor Committee was requested to investigate the employment of children in agriculture, mostly in the cultivation and harvesting of onions, in Orange County, New York. The New York Child Labor Committee was consulted and a representative of the National Child Labor Committee, accompanied by the Secretary of the New York Committee, made a preliminary investigation in the early summer. It was agreed that a study should be made this fall after the schools opened by the New York Committee. The New York Committee requested assistance from the National Committee in setting up the study and in doing certain parts of the work.

The Director of the Department of Investigation and his assistant were brought to New York in response to this request and conducted a study based

upon the school census. They found (1) that the children are used mostly in the cultivation of onions and that the crop is practically out of the ground by September 10th, (2) that children of compulsory school age do not appear to be staying out of school except under work permits, (3) that in certain cases the work permits seem to be used as shields for absence from school and idleness. The field work has been completed and the report will be prepared shortly.

Pennsylvania

At the request of a member of the National Child Labor Committee and after consultation with the Pennsylvania Public Education and Child Labor Association, a brief preliminary study of the use of children in the picking of huckleberries in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania was made in July. There is considerable child labor involved in this work, but the majority of the children are working with their parents and no evidence of violation of existing child labor laws could be found. However, a serious condition was found in the almost complete lack of responsibility on the part of the operators for the living and sanitary conditions found in the camps. In other words the problem was not primarily one of child labor, but of health and sanitation in the camps.

LEGISLATION*

In the last fiscal year the Committee carried on aggressive campaigns in two states—Missouri and New Jersey—and worked in a number of others.

Missouri

In Missouri the work begun in cooperation with the Women's Legislative Committee in 1928 was continued, and Miss Geach, representing this Committee, worked in Missouri until the bill amending the law was finally passed.

The Missouri campaign was valuable not only for the improvement made in the Missouri laws, but as a demonstration of what can be done by a campaign of education extending over a long period of time.

New Jersey

In New Jersey the National Child Labor Committee carried on a campaign running over some months, in cooperation with the New Jersey Consumers' League, the New Jersey Federation of Labor, and other organizations, in support of a bill to make it unlawful to employ any child under sixteen years of age at the time when he is required by law to be in school, or would be so required, if a resident. The National Child Labor Committee bore the brunt of the campaign.

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*A summary of legislation introduced during 1929 and action taken will be sent to anyone requesting it.

The bill passed the House, but died in the Senate being stubbornly held in Committee. A new campaign of education, in which a large number of organizations will join, is now in process of being launched.

Indiana

Upon notification that the child labor law of Indiana was in danger of being weakened, the Director of Legislation accompanied by Mr. Gibbons, attended a conference called at Indianapolis to consider the whole matter. The Committee suggested an amendment to the child labor law to cure the evil complained of. Although this met with the approval of the conference, and a bill incorporating the idea was passed by both houses, it was vetoed by the Governor.

North Carolina

In North Carolina the Committee is cooperating in an educational campaign similar to that conducted last year in Missouri, to amend both the compulsory school attendance and child labor laws in 1931.

Oklahoma

Early in the fiscal year it was hoped that the compulsory school attendance and child labor laws of Oklahoma would be amended and harmonized, but it became evident at a conference called by the Commissioner of Labor that it would not be wise to attempt any general revision of either law in 1929. A special committee is to study both laws. A number of organizations are interested in the matter and this seems to be one of the states for extensive educational campaigning.

Tennessee

At the request of Mrs. Herman Ferger, President of the Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Director of Legislation prepared bills to amend the compulsory school attendance and child labor laws of Tennessee. The bills failed.

Texas

The Director of Legislation aided in setting up a Children's Code Commission in Texas. Bills for amending both the compulsory school attendance and child labor laws were prepared and submitted to the heads of the State Departments of Public Instruction and Labor, and other members of the Commission. Nothing was done. The Commission got under way too late for the legislature of 1929.

The Director of Legislation has been asked to attend a meeting of the Texas Children's Code Commission in December. Texas is listed as another state in which the Committee should cooperate with such organizations as can be interested in an extended campaign of education.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICITY

As the years go by there seems to be an increasing demand for accurate information upon the subject of child labor and also a demand for a knowledge of what the best authorities think upon the subject. The Committee should be able to tell interested groups of any state not only what the child labor conditions in their state are, and their law is, but what changes should be made.

To create a demand for knowledge of child labor conditions, and to meet that demand is a dual function of the Committee. To this end the Committee prepares leaflets, pamphlets and posters for informative and display purposes; issues a monthly journal, THE AMERICAN CHILD; sends out newspaper publicity and special articles; organizes the observance of Child Labor Day; conducts a general information service for the public, including an up-to-date record of pending legislation; arranges radio talks, conference exhibits, etc.

Aside from revisions and reprints the important publications of 1928-29 include the following:

(1) Pamphlets

Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the National Child Labor Committee
Child Labor: A series of articles dealing with child labor in its relation to education, health, mental hygiene, recreation, parental education, and the standard of living
Migratory Child Workers
The Work of the National Child Labor Committee, 1904-29
Child Labor Day Program

(2) State Leaflets

Child Labor and Education in Alabama
Education and Child Labor in Arkansas
Comparative Study of Child Labor Standards and the North Carolina Law
North Carolina's Children
Important (New Jersey flier)
Migratory Child Labor in New Jersey
Comparative Study of Child Labor Standards and the Tennessee Law
Child Labor and Education in Texas

(3) Reports of Investigation Department

Child Labor in Agriculture and Farm Life in the Arkansas Valley of Colorado
Child Workers in Two Connecticut Towns, New Britain and Norwich
Child Labor in Mississippi
Child Workers in Oklahoma

(4) Poster

A Wish. . . .

Newspaper Publicity and Special Articles

Twenty-five press releases were sent out during the year, announcing and reporting lectures by staff members, making public reports of field investigations in Connecticut, Oklahoma, and Mississippi, announcing Child Labor Day, referring to the legislative campaign in New Jersey, making public the summary of twenty-five years of work, and reporting our San Francisco meetings.

Sixteen special magazine articles were prepared by the staff.

Clippings received at the office based on the releases of the Committee, commenting on or reprinting its publications, or reporting its activities, totalled 568.

Distribution of Literature

The number of requests for information and literature totaled 3,306. Exclusive of the regular mailing of THE AMERICAN CHILD, 217,659 pieces of literature were distributed as follows:

For Child Labor Day	93,949
For all other requests	38,295
For educational publicity	19,247
Library distribution	3,072
Conference distribution	14,096
Special distribution of state leaflets	49,000

MEMBERSHIP

The primary purpose of the Membership Department is to raise funds to carry on the work of the Committee. During the year, 66 lectures were given, 7 local treasurers established, 14 membership conferences held, and 180,450 pieces of literature distributed by this Department. While the membership of the Committee has not increased during the fiscal year, the income has.

The total contributing membership at the beginning of the 25th year was 10,390½, the subscriptions amounting to $67,843.26. At the close of the 25th fiscal year, the contributing membership was 10,222, and the subscriptions amounted to $68,743.42.

The distribution in membership classification is as follows:

Renewing Donors	68	
New Donors	3	71
Renewing Supporting Members	84	
New Supporting Members	3	87
Renewing Sustaining Members	436	
New Sustaining Members	16	452
Renewing Subscribing Members	1657	
New Subscribing Members	73	1730
Renewing Contributing Members	3029	
New Contributing Members	140	3169
Renewing Associate Members	3744	
New Associate Members	316	4060
Renewing Contributors	271	
New Contributors	44	315
Renewing Libraries	316	
New Libraries	29	345
		10,229
Less Cancelled		7
Total		10,222

FINANCIAL

The Treasurer's report as audited by Haskins and Sells, Certified Public Accountants, follows:

DEBITS

BALANCE, OCTOBER 1, 1928		$15,985.92
RECEIPTS:		
Subscriptions	$68,743.42	
Gifts from The New York Foundation	1,000.00	
Miscellaneous gifts	5,390.00	
Community Fund (Detroit)	1,500.00	
Bequests	5,050.00	
Sale of publications	340.73	
Sale of photos and slides	2.50	
Income from investments	3,707.50	
Interest on bank balances	428.74	
Total		86,162.89
Total debits		$102,148.81

CREDITS

EXPENSES:		
Salaries:		
Administrative (not charged to other expense accounts)	$7,663.06	
Clerical (not charged to other expense accounts)	7,796.48	
Investigations	9,915.13	
Drafting and supporting legislation	12,068.08	
Publicity and research	18,838.08	
Postage	596.35	
Rent	3,500.00	
Traveling	958.51	
Stationery and office supplies	1,025.38	
Telephone and telegraph	575.49	
Purchase of child labor literature	157.89	
Membership campaign	12,253.43	
Miscellaneous	1,497.89	
FURNITURE AND FIXTURES (purchased)	88.16	
SECURITIES PURCHASED	14,360.00	
INTEREST ON SECURITIES PURCHASED	161.39	
Total credits		$91,455.32
BALANCE, SEPT. 30, 1929—CASH ON DEPOSIT AND ON HAND		$10,693.49